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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Friday, February 25, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "WEATHER AND OUR FOOD." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Today I'm going to talk about the weather -- about good weather for a change. I'm speaking of weather as it is related to food -- how it makes a difference in the supply of apples -- and potatoes -- dried prunes -- and other foods you buy from the corner grocer.

Ordinarily we don't hear much about good weather. All we see about it in the newspapers usually is just the daily forecast -- written in fine type and taking up very little space.

But when something terrible happens -- a big flood -- a series of dust storms -- or a record breaking snow -- then weather is front page stuff. We see pictures in the papers or on the movie screen -- an airplane view of a snow-trapped city -- or the honeymoon bridge at Niagara Fallas as it finally breaks down in the ice jam.

However, good weather is news -- for the food shopper. And from that standpoint the weather of 1937 is still making news.

Here are some of the food-weather headlines. The first one is just three crisp words, "Big Apple Crop." But behind that general head there is this story.

Last year's crop of apples was the largest we've had in more than ten years. All over the country there were more apples. But the biggest increase in apple production took place where there was the best weather -- in the central and eastern States.

But here's the 1938 angle of the apple story. At the first of this year there were more apples in cold storage than there has been for any other year we have on record. That means we're having more apples than usual this late in the season. And apple prices are still low. So get out your apple recipes again. There's no telling what next year's crop may or may not be.

Here's food headline number two. Listen carefully because it sounds a lot like the other one -- except this one reads "Bumper Pear Crop." Behind that headline is the big crop of last year and the bigger-than-usual supply of pears in cold storage now.

Of course pears in cold storage now are mostly winter varieties like the Anjou or the Nelis. These varieties have been becoming more popular during the past several years.

Now for a vegetable headliner. Here it is -- the lowly spud -- the white potato. The potato crop last year was big -- mainly because of good growing conditions. Actually farmers planted potatoes on less land than they did the year before but got more potatoes.

Here's headline number four, and we're back to fruits again. But this time it's dried fruits. Just for a change this headline is going to read the way a crop reporter puts it. He says, "The supply of related dried fruits produced in 1937 was substantially above what it has been in other recent years."

And that's good news in any language. For raisins, and dried prunes, and apricots, and peaches are especially good in the winter when we can't get so much variety in fresh fruits. And as you know the dried fruits are all fairly rich in important food minerals.

Other 1937 crops that are still making headlines are sweetpotatoes -- rice -- and dry beans. The good weather last year helped make a big supply of all these.

And the weather, both last year and this, helped the citrus crop. For oranges and grapefruit are not usually picked and stored but are left on the tree until they are ready to be shipped. Since the first part of the winter, oranges and grapefruit have been abundant. In fact, oranges are more plentiful than ever before and low in price.

Then there are the fresh vegetables coming to market from the States where the temperature's warm and the sun shining. I've seen big heads of crisp green lettuce that I was told came from the Imperial Valley of California. (It's one of our best <u>winter</u> garden spots.)

And there are new carrots from Arizona and new beets and spinach from Texas. And the strawberry picking is well along in Florida.

All these fresh crops are shipped north, east, and west in air-conditioned, temperature-controlled cars that defy wind and weather. But the weather over the fields still controls in large measure what goes into our market basket. And in that we've been lucky so far in 1938.

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